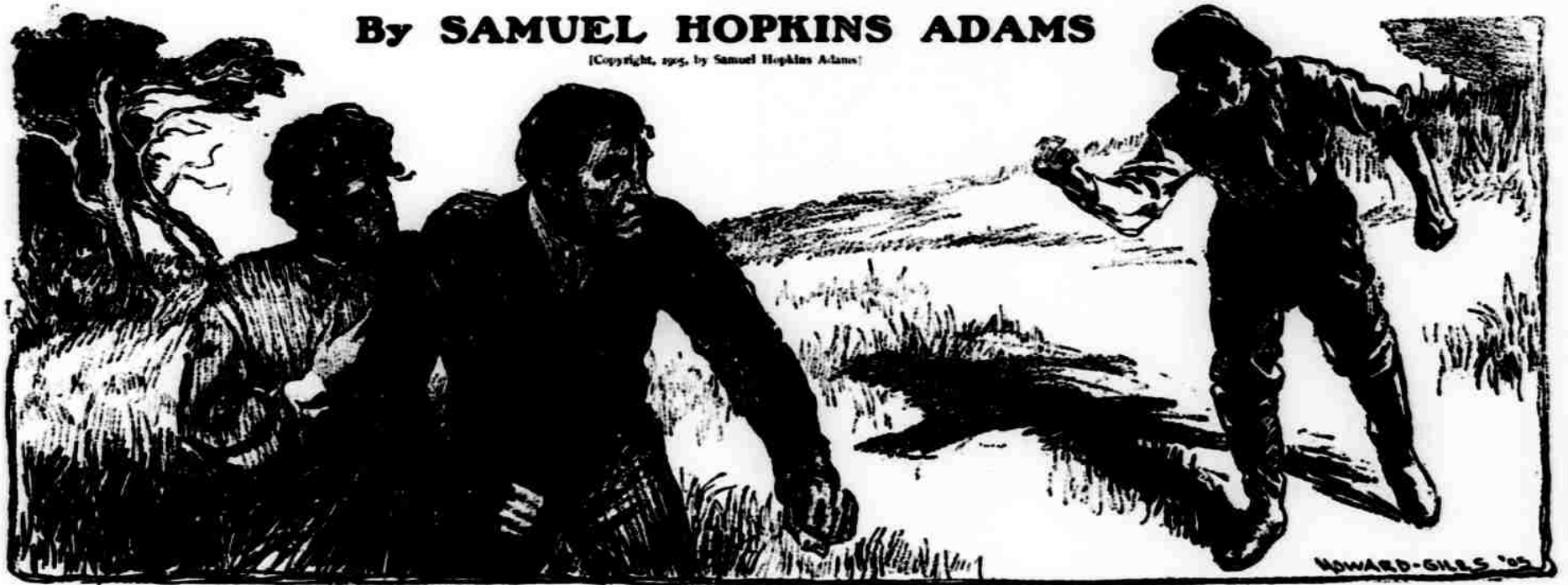


# THE FLYING DEATH

## Unraveling an Enigma

By SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS

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### CHAPTER VIII.

#### Cross-Purposes

HAS the generalissimo been disobeying his own orders?" called out Dolly Ravenden from the porch, as Haynes came up the pathway early the next morning. He did not respond to the rallying tone, habitual between them, which covered a well-founded friendship. Instead he said:

"Miss Dolly, you heard that horse last night. What did you think of the cry?"

"It went through me like a knife," said the girl, shuddering. "I thought it was a death scream. The horse I was on thought so too."

"I'd have sworn to it myself," said Haynes, and fell into deep thought.

"Well?" queried the girl after waiting impatiently. "It isn't a secret, is it?"

"Something in that line. I've just been all over the ground between the place where Mr. Colton was assailed and the beach, without finding hide or hair of the horse. It must have escaped."

"I for one won't believe that until I see it alive."

Haynes glanced at her sharply. "Woman's intuition," he said. "I won't either. Well, I'm going to breakfast."

The girl lingered, looking out into the ruddy-golden morning. It was late September weather, a day burnished with sunlight. A faint haze softened the splendor of the knolls. The air was instinct with the rare, fine quality of the vanishing summer. It was the falling cadence of the season, one of the last few perfect, fulfilling notes of the year's love-melody. With all the knowledge that death and horror lurked somewhere in the lovely expanse spread before her, Dolly Ravenden yearned to it. Soon she would be back amid the cosmopolitan gaieties of the Capitol. She loved that too, but with a different and shallower part of her nature. Sharply it came to her that this year she would leave with a deeper regret than ever before, and the nature of that regret was formulating itself against the stern veto of her will. "A man I've not seen half a dozen times!" she scolded herself.

A certain feminine exasperation against herself was illogically and perversely turned against Dick Colton as he strode around the corner of the piazza. The experienced wagger of love-tilts might have interpreted the expression she turned to him, and have fled the stricken field. Poor Dick was the merest novice. His attitude toward woman had been much the same as toward men, varying in degree according to the charm or quality of the individual; but all of a kind, until he had encountered Dolly Ravenden. To his unsuspecting mind it seemed that at that present moment he was in the greatest luck. The sun was shining with a special, even a personal, luster. Abruptly it darkened several million candle-power as Miss Ravenden gave him the most casual of greetings and the curve of a shoulder while she scanned the spreading landscape.

"Have I done anything, Miss Dol—Miss Ravenden?" asked blundering Dick.

"Done anything?" repeated she with indifferent inquiry. "I'm sure I don't know."

This fairly nonplussed him. He sat down and wondered what to do next. Unfortunately his thoughts turned upon his brother.

#### SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

Stanley Richards Colton, a prominent young physician, went to Montauk Point, Long Island, to recuperate, stopping at a hostelry known as Third House. Other guests there were Professor Ravenden, an eminent scientist, and his daughter Dolly, and Harris Haynes, a newspaper man, who had befriended Helga Johnston, adopted daughter of the proprietor of Third House. The night of Colton's arrival a shipwreck occurred, and the hotel people assisted in saving the sailors. Haynes and Helga, while trying to rescue Whalley, a Portuguese juggler, were heroically saved from the undertow by Colton. One of the sailors, Petersen by name, was discovered to have been killed by a terrible wound through the back. The testimony of the sailors showed that the wound must have been inflicted in the breeches-buoy between the ship and shore. Colton and Dolly subsequently found a dead sheep on the beach with a deep wound in its back. Colton learned in conversation with Helga that his brother Everard had been Helga's sweetheart, opposition of the Colton family having estranged the couple. Professor Ravenden reported that a strange object, which gave forth a rasping noise, passed over him the previous evening. While securing Haynes' permission for his brother Everard to renew his courtship of Helga, Colton discovered that Haynes was afflicted with an incurable malady. Whalley gave a wonderful exhibition of knife-throwing, at the conclusion of which he drove a knife dangerously near to Haynes' face, as a "warning," he said, then disappeared over the hills. Everard Colton arrived at Third House. He reported that his horse was strangely frightened and broke away, and that he felt a strange movement in the air, while riding from the station. Later a terrible scream from the sea was believed to be the dying agony of the horse.

"Isn't it great that you know Ev?" he pursued. "I sent for him to come down."

"You sent for him?" cried the girl in a tone that straightened up Dick like a pin.

"Certainly. Why not?"

"To see Helga, I suppose."

"Yes."

"Of course you assumed that she was dying to see him."

"Not in the least," said Dick with some spirit. "Just to give him his fair chance."

"You didn't think of being fair toward anyone else?"

"Toward whom?"

"Miss Johnston herself, in the first place. One expects a certain degree of delicacy even from—from—"

"Don't smooth it down on my account," said Dick grimly. "You seem to be in a fairly frank mood to-day."

The imp of the perverse indeed was guiding Dolly's words now. "From a man one knows nothing whatever about," she concluded.

"And isn't interested in knowing," suggested he.

"I'm as fond of Helga as of my own sister," she went on vehemently. "She is three years younger than I, and I—well, I assume some responsibility for her." Her tones challenged Dick. He merely bowed.

"You know how it is between Helga and your brother?"

"Something of it."

"And knowing, do you think it was right to bring him down here?"

"Why not?"

"Because," said Miss Ravenden hotly, "your family became panic-stricken at the thought of Everard's

Colton Met Him Half-way—It Was  
No Fight, for the Physician  
Was Greatly His Superior

marrying Helga, before they even took the trouble to find out anything about her. To insult a woman whom they have never seen! Why—why—Helga is as— If I had a brother, and Helga Johnston was willing to marry him I should count it an honor to the Ravensdens."

All the imperious pride of a family who had been landed gentry in the South, while Colton's sturdy forebears were wielding pick and shovel in the far West, who had signed the Declaration of Independence before the first American Colton had worked a toilsome passage across from his North Country hovel to the land of sudden riches, shone in her eyes.

"So should I!" returned Dick quietly. "But surely Helga Johnston did not tell you all this?"

"No, she did not. It was the same meddlesome friend who first told her of your family's objections. Oh, if I was Everard I would tell his family to—to—"

"To go to the deuce," suggested Dick helpfully.

"Please not to put words into my mouth!—particularly such words. And after what I told you about Harris Haynes I should have thought that an ordinary sense of justice— Oh, it was unmanly of you!"

Dolly's imp now had spurred her into a respectable state of rage, and Dick's wrath rose to meet hers.

"Just a moment," he said. "What was that about Haynes?" Two wrinkled lines appeared between his eyes. His mouth altered in its set, giving to his naturally pleasant face an aspect of almost savage determination.

"Why," thought Dolly, "he's looking at me as if I wasn't a girl at all, but just something in his path to beat down." And her quick pang of alarm had something pleasurable in it.

"I want that again about Haynes."

"I say you were not fair to him. You know perfectly well that whatever chance Mr. Haynes may have with Helga—"

"Chance of what? Of marrying her?"

"Certainly," said Dolly boldly.

"Do you think she loves Haynes?"

"I don't know."

"You do know. You think that she doesn't. And do you think he loves her?"

"Why should I tell you, when you will only brow-beat and contradict me. I know this: that there is the most beautiful affection between them that I have ever known between a man and a girl. With two people less fine than Helga and Harris Haynes it could not be so. You aren't capable of understanding that sort of thing. And so you would destroy this for the mere whim of a boy!"

"It is not the whim of a boy," returned Dick sternly. "It has made Everard a man. I think she loves him."

"What if she does?" said the girl recklessly.

"You mean you would have her marry Haynes without love?"

"Yes," said Dolly, too far committed to back down now; but within herself she was saying: "Oh, you wretched little liar!"

"Ah!" observed Dick with a change to cold courtesy.